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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD GOVERNOR TELLS CDA DE-BA'ATHIFICATION WAS
LEGAL, ASKS FOR INCREASED USG PROFILE IN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 422
[B. 09BAGHDAD397](#)
[C. BAGHDAD 442](#)
[D. BAGHDAD395](#)
[E. BAGHDAD387](#)
[F. BAGHDAD245](#)

Classified By: Charge d'affaires a.i. Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

[1. \(U\) THIS IS A PRT BAGHDAD MESSAGE.](#)

[2. \(C\) SUMMARY:](#) Baghdad Governor Salah Abd al-Razzaq (Da'wa) questioned CDA about the USG's position on de-Ba'athification on February 18, noting that the de-Ba'athification process was legal and mandated under the Iraqi Constitution. He criticized U.S. officials' recent comments linking the parliamentary Accountability and Justice Commission (AJC) to Iran. The CDA countered that the United States had no interest in bolstering the Ba'ath party. However, he asserted that the USG was concerned about the credibility of the election process. The Governor suggested that the United States move more aggressively to promote its good works in Iraq in order to educate the Iraqi population about the value of the bilateral relationship. The CDA emphasized the importance of the economic, education and rule of law efforts underway under the Strategic Framework Agreement. END SUMMARY.

[3. \(C\) A close confidante of the PM, Salah Abd al-Razzaq is a member of the Prime Minister's Da'wa party and was elected Governor by the Da'wa-dominated Provincial Council \(PC\) in April 2009. He sought a meeting with CDA, implying that this was at the direction of PM Maliki.](#)

What Are You Doing On De-Ba'athification?

[4. \(C\) Abd al-Razzaq was critical of the USG's public statements regarding de-Ba'athification of the national candidate list for elections. He wanted to know what message the United States was delivering by allowing Commanding General Odierno to address the Iraqi political process and the composition of the Accountability and Justice Commission \(AJC\) in recent remarks in Washington. Abd al-Razzaq said the image of a U.S. military officer expounding on an internal political issue was deeply troubling to Iraqi political leaders and confused the public about the role of U.S. forces. Further, Abd al-Razzaq asked whether the USG was working to bring Ba'athists back into the election race, specifically Dhafer al-Ani and Saleh al-Mutlaq. He warned that the Ba'ath party is an emotional issue for Iraqis. The CDA countered that the United States had no interest in bolstering the Ba'ath party. However, he asserted that the USG was concerned about the credibility of the election process, the lack of transparency in the AJC's de-Ba'athification campaign \(ref A\), and the failure to permit excluded candidates adequate access to the charges](#)

against them (ref B). (NOTE: Shortly after the meeting with CDA, he called PRT staff to comment negatively on Ambassador Hill's public statement at a U.S. Institute of Peace event reinforcing U.S. concerns about the AJC. END NOTE.)

USG SHOULD PUBLICIZE ITS PROJECTS

15. (C) The Governor told CDA that the USG was doing great things in Iraq to promote development. He cautioned that ordinary Iraqi citizens had no idea of the American assistance and cooperation because it was not adequately presented to them. He added, "This is a problem because what sticks in the minds of the average citizens are the negative incidents such as Abu Ghraib, the bombing of Sadr City, and, most recently, the Maysan Province raid." (ref C). Abd al-Razzaq reiterated his gratitude for the American efforts Qal-Razzaq reiterated his gratitude for the American efforts in Iraq, especially for removing the Saddam regime and bringing democracy to the region. Although Iraq is suffering through hard times now, one day it will be democratic and prosperous and at that point Iraqis will be willing "to cooperate with our friends, especially the United States because they fought for Iraq's freedom and suffered casualties fighting side by side with Iraqis."

16. (C) The Governor suggested that Iraqi and U.S. officials now need to engage in joint public diplomacy, appearing side by side in the media cutting ribbons on projects. Furthermore, he suggested that American names be given to Iraqi public projects such as schools, hospitals and retirement homes, and was keen to see closer cooperation on university linkages. The CDA emphasized the importance of

the economic, education and rule of law efforts underway under the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA). He observed that the Governor has a role to play in explaining this to the Iraqi people, as well as explaining the election process. Furthermore, the SFA also commits both governments to ongoing cultural and economic exchanges

Comment

17. (C) COMMENT: The Governor spoke from prepared notes, and it appears that he was delivering a message on behalf of the Da'wa party. However, his comments on the importance of a USG effort to create a lasting public image in Baghdad are long-standing. Abd al-Razzaq has repeatedly told the PRT that the USG needs to create an American-branded cultural legacy, one that goes beyond our infrastructure projects.

For more information on PRT Baghdad and Baghdad governance, please see our Intellipedia site:
http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/PRT_Baghdad

For more information about the Dr. Salah, please see:
http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Salah_Abdul-Razzaq
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